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IDENTICAL LETTERS DATED 31 JULY 1998 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 30 July 1998 from Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, concerning the practices of the United States of America in obstructing the implementation of the oil-for-food programme. Such practices flout the will of the international community as represented by the United Nations and exploit the Security Council and the Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) with the aim of achieving illegal political objectives against the people and the political regime of Iraq and of deliberately prolonging the day-to-day sufferings of the Iraqi people.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Saeed Hamid HASAN
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Identical letters dated 30 July 1998 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

I wish to inform you that the contracts in implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding are continuing to encounter difficulties with regard to their processing, confirmation and issuance, in spite of the fact that the items to which the contracts relate are specified in the categorized lists annexed to the procurement and distribution plan concerning the phases of its implementation which have all been approved by you.

In spite of the fact that over 14 months have passed since the specified starting time for phase II under the Memorandum of Understanding, and more than 8 months since phase III began and phase IV became operational, many contracts have been on hold for phases II and III since 4 June 1998.

With respect to phase II, which ended on 3 December 1997, there are still 21 contracts on hold, comprising medical supplies and foodstuffs, and equipment for the electricity sector. There are also 20 contracts that have been blocked by the representative of the United States of America in the Security Council Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) (the 661 Committee) relating to the purchase of foodstuffs, medicines and equipment for the electricity sector.

This is in addition to contracts amounting to $40,385,000 which had been approved by the 661 Committee. However, the bank holding the account has not opened letters of credit with respect to them pending reconciliations between the 13 per cent account for the 3 northern governorates and the 52 per cent account for the 15 governorates. This has not so far been done despite persistent assurances as to the need to have the matter dealt with as it is preventing Iraq from using the funds that would have been made available to cover credits on contracts that are ready.

With respect to phase III which ended on 3 May 1998, there are still 17 contracts on hold which also concern the purchase of foodstuffs, medical requirements and special equipment for the electricity sector. This is in addition to 22 contracts that have been blocked by the representative of the United States of America for those sectors.

The fact that these contracts continue to be on hold or blocked, despite the ending of the implementation phases under the procurement and distribution plans for those two phases means, first and foremost, that the arrival of the material contracted for is delayed; as everybody knows, these materials come under the heading of basic humanitarian requirements of an urgent nature for the Iraqi people. Such delay results in wrecking the oil-for-food-and-medicines programme which was adopted as an exceptional and temporary measure to deal with the deteriorating humanitarian situation of the Iraqi people as a result of the blockade that has been imposed on it for over eight years.

A cursory review of the progress of contracts under the Memorandum of Understanding shows clearly that the underlying reason for all the instances in which these contracts have been put on hold or blocked is the position adopted by the representative of the United States of America in the 661 Committee who is at pains to fabricate all sorts of groundless pretexts and justifications to prevent the implementation of the contracts in a flexible manner, thereby delaying the delivery of the humanitarian supplies to the Iraqi people.

This stance adopted by the United States, which delays the arrival of food, medical equipment, medicines and spare parts for the electricity sector, reveals the falsity of the lying allegations of the United States. At a time when the United States Administration is shedding crocodile tears over the difficult humanitarian situation of the Iraqi people, it is endeavouring, by every means at its disposal, to put further obstacles and difficulties in the way of any measures aimed at eliminating, or even mitigating, the suffering of the Iraqi people.

In putting before you some concrete examples of the practices of the United States representative in the 661 Committee, which illustrate the position of the United States Administration, I wish to make clear to you the extent of that Administration's contempt for the will of the international community, as represented in the United Nations and in the Security Council.

The United States of America is endeavouring to exploit the Security Council and the 661 Committee in order to achieve illegal political objectives against the people and the political regime of Iraq. That country is also trying to attain those objectives by continuing to impede the progress of contracts for the purchase of humanitarian equipment and is thus deliberately prolonging the day-to-day sufferings of the Iraqi people, particularly children, women and the elderly, hundreds of whom fall victim each day to this inhumane United States attitude.

Iraq hopes that you will make every effort in your power to put an end to this blocking action by the United States of America and that you will endeavour to secure the implementation of all the contracts that have been put on hold or blocked, all of which involve materials and equipment that are urgently needed by the Iraqi people.

Please inform the members of the Security Council of this letter and have it circulated as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Tariq AZIZ
Deputy Prime Minister
Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs